

## Message Text

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ACTION NEA-10

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FM AMEMBASSY TUNIS

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TAGS: USTSJC, BEXP, EAID, TS

SUBJ: TUNISIAN EXPORT DEVELOPMENT PROGRAM--PARTICIPATION  
OF WORLD TRADE INSTITUTE

1. DURING OCT JOINT COMM MEETINGS, WORLD TRADE INSTITUTE (WTI) COLLABORATION WITH TUNISIAN EXPORT PROMOTION AGENCY (CEPEX) WAS DISCUSSED AS ONE AVENUE TO ADVANCE OBJECTIVE OF GREATER U.S.-TUNISIAN TRADE, SPECIFICALLY EXPANSION OF TUNISIAN EXPORTS TO U.S. ROBER KELLER OF WTI VISITED TUNISIA IN JAN 1976 TO EVALUATE RESULTS OF 1975 COLLABORATIVE PROGRAM AND MAKE PLANS FOR 1976. WTI INVOLVEMENT IN TUNISIA FOR 1975 WAS FUNDED BY WTI'S WORLDWIDE GRANT FROM AID IN ORDER TO LAUNCH PROGRAM AND ESTABLISH WTI CREDIBILITY WITH CEPEX.

2. IN CONVERSATIONS WITH EMBOFFS, KELLER STATED THAT WTI WOULD REQUEST APPROXIMATELY \$18,000 (LESS THAN ONE-THIRD OF TOTAL \$60,000 COST OF PROJECT) TO CONTINUE EXPORT POTENTIAL AND MARKETING PROGRAM INTO 1976 WITH REMAINDER COMING FROM AID GRANT. ON LEAVING TUNISIA, KELLER REPORTED TO EMBOFFS THAT GOT HAD AGREED TO THIS PROPOSITION.

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3. KELLER SENT LETTER TO CEPEX FEB 4 CONFIRMING WTI/CEPEX PROGRAM FOR 1976, INCLUDING CEPEX PARTIAL FINANCING. CEPEX OFFICIAL DOGHRI CALLED ON EMBASSY MAR 5 AND STATED THAT CEPEX HAD MERELY TAKEN NOTE OF KELLER PROPOSITION RE FINANCING AND NOW DECIDED WTI WOULD HAVE TO FINANCE ENTIRE PROGRAM. APPARENTLY CEPEX, AS WELL AS VARIOUS GOT AGENCIES WHOSE PRODUCTS WTI TO PROMOTE (OILS OFFICE, WINE OFFICE, ARTISANAT, ETC) DID NOT INCLUDE PROVISIONS TO SUPPORT WTI IN THEIR 1976 BUDGETS AND THEREFORE CAN NOT RPT NOT MAKE ANY PAYMENTS, PARTICULARLY IN DOLLARS AS WTI REQUIRES. DOGHRI ASKED EMBASSY TO SO INFORM WTI AND ASSURE THAT WTI FINANCES ENTIRE PROJECT, PRESUMABLY FROM AID FUNDS.

4. EMBOFF DEMURRED, POINTING OUT THAT CEPEX SHOULD RESPOND DIRECTLY TO WTI LETTER. HE ALSO NOTED THAT SUM INVOLVED IS MINUSCULE RELATIVE TO POSSIBLE EXPORT BENEFITS AND MORE FAVORABLE THAN OTHER MARKETING ASSISTANCE PROPOSALS GOT HAD RECEIVED FROM U.S. COMMERCIAL FIRMS. UNLESS TUNISIA HAS RESOLVED ITS SERIOUS MARKETING PROBLEM FOR OLIVE OIL AND OTHER PRODUCTS, IT SHOULD PURSUE ANY OPPORTUNITY TO EXPAND ITS EXPORT EARNINGS. DOGHRI REMAINED ADAMANT, HOWEVER, AND APPARENTLY SENT SHORT CABLE TO KELLER SAYING GOT CAN NOT RAISE \$18,000.

5. COMMENT: EMBASSY REGRETS CEPEX/GOT POSITION ON THIS PROJECT. KELLER STEP BY STEP PROGRAM WITH EMPHASIS ON MARKET DEVELOPMENT AND ADAPTION OF TUNISIAN PRODUCTS TO SUIT U.S. MARKET SEEMED WELL SUITED TO AIDING TUNISIAN EXPORTERS AND MANUFACTURERS. PROGRAM WOULD ALSO HAVE COUNTERED GOT INCLINATION TO SEND TRADE MISSIONS WITHOUT ADEQUATE GROUND-WORK AND PARTICIPATE IN TRADE SHOWS, NEITHER OF WHICH LIKELY TO BE SUCCESSFUL IN U.S.

6. ACTION REQUESTED: EMBASSY/ USAID SUGGEST THAT AID/W DISCUSS MATTER WITH KELLER OF WTI. WHILE WE SUPPORT WTI ACTIVITIES ON BEHALF OF TUNISIA, WE DO NOT RECOMMEND THAT AID FINANCE ENTIRE COST OF 1976 PROGRAM. MODEST GOT CONTRIBUTION (FROM CEPEX OR BENEFITING TUNISIAN AGENCIES) DESIRABLE ECONOMICALLY IN CREATING TANGIBLE GOT STAKE IN SUCCESS OF WTI PROJECT. GOT BUDGETARY VISE IS NOT RPT NOT LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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SO FIRM THAT EXCEPTION FOR TOKEN SUM OF \$18,000 CAN NOT BE ARRANGED. HOWEVER, AID/W MAY WISH TO SUGGEST THAT WTI COULD NEGOTIATE WITH CEPEX THAT TUNISIAN CONTRIBUTION BE CARRIED INTO CY 1977 TO PERMIT INCLUSION IN NEXT TUNISIAN FISCAL YEAR OPERATING BUDGET.  
SEELYE

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## Message Attributes

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